

project WEB

fall
2001

Connecting Projects WILD, WET and Learning Tree in New Hampshire

Defining Service-Learning

It's not an easy task.

Service-learning can best be described as a way to blend service and learning, so that the service reinforces, improves and strengthens the learning, and the learning reinforces, improves and strengthens the service. The pedagogy of service-learning, at its best, produces a



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Students at the Stratford Public School install a sign for a trail they constructed in the Nash Stream Forest.

greater impact than either could have produced separately.

The characteristics of service-learning include the use of community service as the vehicle to achieve specific academic goals and objectives. As part of the process, students are given structured time to reflect on their service and learning experiences through a mix of writing, reading, speaking, listening and creating in small and large groups and individual work. In many cases, service-learning assists

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Service-Learning:

Where kids are part of the solution

By ESTHER COWLES AND JULIA FEDER

Service-learning is thriving in our schools. To help us better understand this important teaching strategy and its connection to environmental education, Project WEB turned to two leading authorities on the subject. Susan Paige-Morgan is the



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Service-Learning Coordinator at the NH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. Robert "Bo" Hoppin is a Senior Project Manager at ANTIOCH NEW ENGLAND INSTITUTE. They share with us their excitement for service-learning and ideas for how it may be incorporated into classrooms and communities throughout the state.

EC: How do you define service-learning?

SPM: The NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION's official definition reads, "Service-learning provides thoughtfully organized experiences that integrate students' academic learning with service that meets actual community needs...." For me, service-

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"Every student involved in service-learning needs to understand what each step of the process is doing, not only for the community but also for themselves."

Susan Paige-Morgan





WEB SIGHTINGS...


A SHORT-LIST OF WEBSITES FOR YOUR SURFING PLEASURE


KIDS: Kids Involved in Doing Service


www.kidsconsortium.org - KIDS advocates an award-winning service-learning model known as "Kids as Planners" that challenges youth to identify, research, and propose solutions to real-life problems in their schools and communities as part of their academic curriculum. KIDS also offers grant funding.

 SERVICE-LEARNING in Composition
www.ncte.org/service - a site for those interested in connecting writing instruction to community action.

 NATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING CLEARINGHOUSE
www.servicelearning.org - this organization was designed to collect and disseminate information and materials related to service-learning for Learn and Serve America grantees and others. They also operate a listserv.

 COOPERATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE — LEARN AND SERVE
www.cns.gov/learn - site containing resources for teachers, administrators and information on how to get national recognition for your school.

 BIG DUMMY'S GUIDE TO SERVICE-LEARNING
www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/bigdummy.html - serves as a virtual guide and library of service-learning.

 LEARNING IN DEED
www.learningindeed.org - a national initiative to engage more young people in service to others as part of their academic life.

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students in developing intangibles such as empathy, personal values, beliefs, awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, social responsibility, and a sense of caring for others.


To encourage participation in community service and service-learning, some school districts have instituted service requirements in public schools. In recent years, however, education leaders have recognized the academic benefits of integrating community service activities into the classroom. Numerous districts, schools, classrooms, and students are participating in service-learning activities even when not mandated. Involving America's students in community service activities is one of the first objectives that was established under one of the National Education Goals for the year 2000, that of preparing students to be responsible citizens.

There are several models for service-learning. One model is having service-learning take place within a particular subject or unit of study. This occurs in classrooms, where teachers use service-learning to address

the same curricular goals for which conventional methods are traditionally used. For example, American history teachers have had students develop relationships with nursing home residents to learn from a personal standpoint what life was like in an earlier time.

Another model involves service-learning as a class unto itself. In this case, the school offers a class that performs all planning, evaluation, assessment and reflection concerning the service effort through structured classroom activities. Students research the backgrounds of community situations, develop alternate solutions, and establish coalitions with

service agencies and other community resources to address community needs.

There are other ways service-learning can also take place within the academic setting. These include an individual student that initiates the process on her own and provides service outside of class time or a student-based extracurricular club that performs similar activities to those performed by adult service clubs. 



A student from the Gorham High School plants a tree at the Gorham Town Forest in May.

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Testimonials

Service-Learning in Action – The Harold Martin School

During the '99-'00 school year, our four first grade classes at the Harold Martin School in Hopkinton decided on a service-learning project using grant money from KIDSNET. The kids and the teachers decided that we would produce a children's brochure for the Brockway Preserve, a local nature preserve that all schools in our town use. The first grade usually visits at least twice during the year in conjunction with our wetlands and winter units, and to make the brochure we added a spring visit also. We met with a representative of the Audubon Society of NH who oversees the preserve and who regularly provides

teaching staff when we visit.

We divided the preserve into four basic study areas with each class taking one of them to study in depth. After several visits and brainstorming sessions, each class voted and came up with three or four short paragraphs that told the important facts about each area. Then everyone submitted illustrations to go with the text.

Now it was ready for layout and publication. I contacted a teacher at the high school who taught desktop publishing. Our project fit right in with the end of the year projects they were doing and four

of his students worked on it. We printed up 200 color brochures. Each first grader got a copy, as did all of the teachers involved, and then we presented the Audubon Society of NH with the rest, which they placed in the visitor's box at the preserve.

The best thing about this whole process was the "ownership" of

"The best thing about this whole process was the "ownership" of producing something that really would be used and appreciated by the public..."

Green Works! Action Guide

PROJECT LEARNING TREE is pleased to announce the arrival of the *GreenWorks! Connecting Community Action and Service-Learning* guide. This excellent guide provides step-by-step guidance on planning, conducting, and celebrating service-learning projects. Copies are available from the National PLT office. Consult their website at www.plt.org.

producing something that really would be used and appreciated by the public, and the love and appreciation that developed for the Brockway Preserve with a resolve to keep it pristine and natural for all the wildlife. Those first graders were full of pride and satisfaction and were experts on the preserve and its changing seasons.

JANE LAPREE, GRADE 1 TEACHER
HAROLD MARTIN SCHOOL,
HOPKINTON

Activities Related to Articles in This Issue

Project Learning Tree suggests:

Urban and community trees enrich our lives in several ways. The *Plant A Tree* activity explores the role of these trees in our towns and cities and ways people in our communities plant and care for them.

Signs of air, water, and land pollution abound in our communities, if know where and how to look for them. *Pollution Search* helps students identify the different forms of pollution and ways to remedy pollution in our schools and communities.

Can you list all the ways we use energy at our homes, in our schools,

and on our roads? *Waste Watchers* examines energy use in our daily lives and encourages students to develop strategies for conserving energy in large and small ways.

Project WET suggests:

Investigating, analyzing and participating in *Water Actions* projects, gives students a sense of accomplishment and provides motivation to help manage and protect water in the community.

Students who come to understand that vegetation can affect water erosion through *Just Passing Through*, then plant vegetation to improve an area that has erosion problems.

By mapping and analyzing where water flows over the schoolyard in *Rainy Day Hike*, students can develop a plan to improve drainage and lessen runoff from their school.

Project WILD suggests:

Explore careers and internship opportunities through *Wildwork*.

Students can apply knowledge and evaluate ways to *Improving Wildlife Habitat in the Community* or they can conduct a *Wildlife Issues Community Attitude Survey*.

Wildlife Research provides students information on how to design and conduct a research project.

SERVICE-LEARNING *continued from page 1*

learning is an authentic learning experience that benefits the community, and incorporates student reflection.

BH: I would add that service-learning projects need to make sense within the context of the classroom's curriculum. It must be applicable to a particular subject area that the students are engaged in, and be appropriate for the grade level. It is also important that these projects fit within the context of the state frameworks and local skills-continuum.

EC: The *National Service-learning Act of 1990* provides us with a standard framework. Can you give us an idea what service-learning looked like before this act?

SPM: Service-learning has gone on for a long time. However, it may not have had all the components outlined in the Act. For instance, reflection may not have been emphasized as strongly as it is today.

Essential Elements of Service-Learning

The *National and Community Service Trust Act* of 1993 identifies the following five essential elements of service-learning.

Students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community.

The service is done in connection with an elementary school, a secondary school, institutions of higher education, or community service programs and with the community.

The service helps foster civic responsibility.

The service is integrated into and enhances the curriculum of the students.

Time is set aside for students to reflect on the service.



A group of Hillside Middle School (Manchester) students prepare the area near a storm drain to receive their water quality stencil.



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BH: Not too long ago I came across a boy-scout manual from the 1950's. As I was reading through it I remember realizing, 'Wow these are the steps of service-learning.' The 1990 Act made it a movement and gave it a name, but service-learning has been happening in many forms long before the Act took effect.

EC: How many schools in New Hampshire currently have service-learning projects?

SPM: Twenty-nine schools receive grant funding from the state for service-learning projects, however I am sure there are numerous other schools doing it.

EC: Are all grade levels involved in service-learning projects?

BH: While service-learning happens at all grade levels, we need to look closely at what is developmentally appropriate for different grade levels, and how projects can become increasingly complex as students advance. Projects for younger children can be extensive in time, but should be simple in what they do for the community. As

students get older, their projects can address increasingly complex social and environmental issues.

EC: Can you give an example of a project that is appropriate for a younger grade level?

BH: In Gorham, third graders wrote and illustrated a book that explores the natural history, the cultural heritage, and the businesses in town. The book is available to tourists and community members. Everything about this project focuses on the positive.

EC: What about an example of a well-constructed project at the high school level?

SPM: Social justice projects become more relevant at the upper grade levels. Schools can get involved with shelters by integrating poverty studies into the curriculum. They can build a garden and grow food for the shelters. They may volunteer in food pantries, preparing and serving meals. Some students have even created brochures that outline a safety plan for abused women.

EC: Are students who take part in a service-learning project more likely to volunteer later in life?

BH: Little research has been conducted on the long-term effects of service-learning. Undeniably though, service-learning at the K-12 level allows kids and teachers to practice and refine effective strategies for implementing successful service projects. This certainly has the potential to fill a void in service to community.

EC: What characterizes a successful service-learning project?

SPM: It needs to be participatory; it has to find an authentic need that rises out of in-depth investigation of the community. Also, reflection needs to be present throughout the process, from the inception of the project to its conclusion.

BH: The project itself is not as important as the democratic decision-making that directs it. It might take weeks or months to prepare for a project that takes place in just one afternoon. It is also essential that the kids feel like they accomplished what they set out to do.

SPM: And then they must celebrate that success.

EC: You have emphasized the importance of reflection. What constitutes good reflection?

SPM: Every student involved in service-learning needs to understand what each step of the process is doing, not only for the community but also for themselves. That's how they will decide what technique they'd like to use to complete the project, establish their opinions, and refine the skills they have to offer.

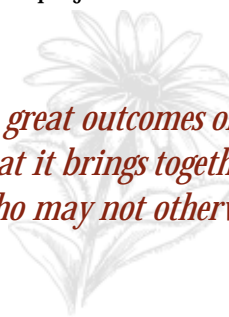
BH: Including reflection in every step of the process can provide a benchmark to help students feel like they are getting somewhere. It is important to remember that reflection

can take many forms. For instance in Keene, students must present a draft plan for service-learning projects to the education advisory committee. The process of preparing that presentation is a form of reflection. It causes the students to look back and see how much they have already accomplished and identify missing pieces. The actual presentation provides reflection, as well, in the form of feedback from this advisory committee.

EC: What are common pitfalls of service-learning projects?

BH: One of the most common mistakes is that the project is too big or grandiose. It must be manageable. Kids in any grade need something concrete to know they have been successful.

SPM: A common misconception is that these projects are "add-ons" to



One of the great outcomes of this sort of learning is that it brings together community members who may not otherwise interact.

previously established curriculum, rather than a way to integrate it or use it as a teaching tool. This is an initial hurdle that can be easily overcome.

BH: Also, forgetting the celebration is a pitfall. Projects often get pushed to the end of the school year. As everything gets pushed back, the celebration piece may be dropped. A celebration can be as simple as ice cream at the end of the day.

EC: How would you direct or encourage a new teacher or administrator interested in service-learning?

BH: I would remind teachers that this is an incredibly powerful tool for engaging students. It is hard for new teachers to realize this before actually completing a project. Once they've gone through it one time, they are much more excited about continuing

to incorporate it in their lesson plans.

SPM: If teachers contact me at the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION I can provide them with extensive information. There is a great service-learning network in the state and many national agencies they can contact.

EC: What are funding sources they can draw upon?

SPM: There are two primary funding sources through the state DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. One is formula funding from the CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING. This allows us to distribute funds for projects through an annual competitive grants program. The second source is through the COMMUNITY, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP (CHESP). This pilot program now supports a few initiatives in the state that bring together a local school system, higher education institution, and usually several community-based organizations. Service-learning is central to their work.

BH: Several private funding sources exist. PLT-trained teachers are eligible for *Greenworks!* Grants of up to \$500 for service projects. ANTIOCH NEW ENGLAND INSTITUTE offers the *New England Green Schools* grant program, which awards grants of \$500-\$2,500 to a teacher or a team of teachers conducting environmental projects. While this grant program does not require the project to be service-learning, such proposals will be very competitive.

EC: Can you share with us the range of service-learning projects that are taking place in New Hampshire?

BH: A Portsmouth teacher focuses her entire curriculum on a highly impacted pond. The students use art and writing to foster observa-

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Schedule Wonders of Wildlife Programs Now For the Spring

Wonders of Wildlife is a series of active education programs designed to increase understanding and knowledge

of New Hampshire's wildlife resources. All programs are delivered by trained Fish and Game volunteer docents. The programs are offered free of charge on a first come, first serve basis. Programs take place at your school or meeting place. The programs are: *Habits and Habitats of New Hampshire Wildlife* (Grades 3-4), *Here Today-Gone Tomorrow* (Grades 5-6), *Pond Ecology* (Grades 3-4) and *Wetlands* (Grades 5-6). Reservations in writing please. Find a reservation form on www.wildlife.nh.us.

workshop, free of charge.

The "Make A Splash" event occurs annually in September for a different New Hampshire school or district each year. Teachers that are involved in water education can apply to have this free event and the associated PROJECT WET workshop brought to their school by contacting Nicole Clegg at 271-4071 or nclegg@des.state.nh.us.

2002 EE Conference in New Hampshire

As we all start to purchase our 2002 calendars, be sure to reserve the weekend of October 4-6, 2002 for the 36th annual *New England Environmental Education Alliance conference*. This conference is being held at GENEVA POINT CONFERENCE CENTER in Moultonborough, NH and is being co-sponsored by NEW HAMPSHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS (NHEE). The event offers numerous EE-focused workshops and networking opportunities. Watch your spring PROJECT WEB newsletter for more information.

Water Use Education Packet Available from USGS

Did you know that New Hampshire used approximately 450 million gallons of water per day in 1995? The U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY has recently published an activity packet for New Hampshire teachers of 4th-8th grade students that contains this information and much more. The activities can be used to teach students about watersheds and recent water use in New Hampshire and focuses on the development of skills such as map and table reading, data collection, and problem solving. In addition, the packets contains a 28" x 38" watershed map of the state. To receive a copy, contact Debra Foster at 226-7837 or dhfoster@usgs.gov.

Welcome to the



Global Gang!

The *Global Gang* is an educational outreach program produced by CITIZENS FOR A SEACOAST AQUARIUM for teachers at elementary and middle schools. CITIZENS FOR A SEACOAST AQUARIUM is the organization developing the aquarium/science museum in Dover, NH. The goal of the *Global Gang* program is to help the schools form fun clubs where children and teachers can explore the wonders of earth, sea, and space. CITIZENS FOR A SEACOAST AQUARIUM is providing a free introductory kit to help teachers form their own "Global Gangs." The kit includes activities, crafts, stories and experiments. Those teachers choosing to "stay in the gang" will receive additional free kits through the school year. The *Global Gang* is designed for children ages 6 through 11, and all activities have been developed by teachers. For more information, or to request an introductory kit, call (603) 436-7778. You may also mail your request to CITIZENS FOR A SEACOAST AQUARIUM, c/o Crystal Kent, PO Box 3003, Portsmouth, NH 03802.

Discovery Room Reopens

The long awaited renovations of the *Discovery Room* at the NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS, Concord, have been completed. The room focuses on New Hampshire natural communities and the wildlife that live in them. Exhibits provide information on basic ecological concepts and on how wildlife is managed. Visitors are invited to peel back the layers to see some of the intricacies of our natural world. *The Discovery Room* (2 Hazen Drive, Concord) is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Group reservations can be made by contacting 271-3211.

Connecticut Watershed Schools Make A Splash – Find out how you can too!

On September 21, 2001, over 500 fifth and sixth grade students and their teachers from New Hampshire and Vermont schools within the Connecticut River Watershed attended the "Make a Splash with Project WET" festival. This one-day educational event introduced the students to several water issues and topics. Teachers participating in the program received specially-developed education resources to use in their classrooms. In addition, each of those teachers was invited to a PROJECT WET

ON THE H.O.M.E. FRONT

Service for the Schoolyard Habitat

BY MARILYN WYZGA

Schoolyard habitat projects provide an ideal opportunity for service-learning, by their very nature. There are many components and phases to the projects. Each is integrated with a variety of disciplines. Team approaches and mentor teaching opportunities form an integral part of the process. The process follows the seasons, continuing throughout the school year and beyond. The benefits to the community, in terms of a service, are tangible and significant.

If you are part of a high school community, and your students are looking for service-learning opportunities to meet graduation requirements, check into your local middle or elementary school. They may have a developing schoolyard habitat project that needs the expertise and involvement of older students. Likewise, those of you teaching younger grades may tap into high school students for valuable assistance with your habitat projects. Community service organizations, such as 4-H, business clubs, and scouting groups, present another valuable source of support.

In a class setting, students may perform all the assessment, planning, execution and evaluation/reflection involved in the schoolyard habitat

effort, in structured classroom activities. Those students pursuing independent study opportunities may assist others by providing a particular service, such as researching and writing grants, designing a component of the habitat area, building a structure, or planting and maintaining a wildlife garden.

Schools involved with PROJECT HOME have already tapped into this essential service-learning resource:

The CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP in Barrington were given a beautiful teaching tool when a Coe-Brown Academy student designed and installed a butterfly garden for her senior portfolio.

COE-BROWN'S NATURAL RESOURCES classes cleared trails at the CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP to meet their community service requirement.

A group of voc-tech students in Manchester built a compost bin and raised planter for the McDONOUGH SCHOOL.

An eighth grader at NORTH HAMPTON SCHOOL keyed out trees on an existing trail, completing a trail guide and map project for his school.

Eagle Scouts cleaned up an historic cemetery along the trail at NORTH HAMPTON SCHOOL.

WHITE MOUNTAIN REGIONAL students in a voc-tech program cleared and cleaned up a small wetland behind their school and established wildlife plantings.

Need more ideas and inspiration? Check out the website of the VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTER AT FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/ideas.html). Here are a few of their service-learning suggestions that relate to schoolyard projects.

Art:

Students design and create *murals* to beautify the school grounds, or work with an artist to design them.

Biology:

Students work with a local nature center to provide free *education programs* and tours for inner city youth; this could happen with an on-site, outdoor classroom.

Education:

In the program, "Play and Recreation Programming for Children, A Developmental Approach," students plan and implement sequentially *appropriate play and recreation environments*, schoolyard habitats are natural areas for children to play, as well.

English:

Students practice writing *persuasive letters/essays* for non-profits to alert citizens and media; in this case, about a beginning/growing/developed school nature area.

Environmental Studies:

Based on their learning with schoolyard habitats, students create *workshops* for the community on "greening" their backyards. ■



A student from the Ed Fenn Elementary School plants a tree in the Gorham Town Forest in May 2001.

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SERVICE-LEARNING *continued from page 5*

tion skills. They conduct water quality testing, learn about wildlife, and decide on an action that will help restore the wetland. The year wraps up with reflective writing about what they've learned from studying the pond. This example is exciting because evaluation of the students' writing shows that when they write about this pond they perform at a much higher level than when they are writing a standard essay in response to an irrelevant question.


The work in Keene focuses on kids becoming stewards of public lands. Projects range from displays about flora and fauna, to making decisions about whether or not to put in new paths, to invasive species studies. The students' works has been so well received by city officials that their involvement has expanded from a 2½-acre parcel to stewardship of all public land. Students now write regular articles for the local paper about historical figures and their influence on the different public lands in Keene.

One of the great outcomes of this sort of learning is that it brings together community members who may not otherwise interact. For example, students in the RIVENDELL SCHOOL DISTRICT are building a trail that connects the four towns across two states. The superintendent noted that this trail has generated an excitement throughout the community she had not seen before.

EC: These are powerful projects for kids to work on. It must be amazing to see how kids grow from these experiences.

SPM: It really is. They begin to understand that there is not a line between "those people" and "us." The kids are open to realizing that we are all alike and to recognizing what they can do to help.

BH: Given the chance, kids want to become a part of the solution. Service-learning in schools presents that opportunity in a structured way.

SPM: These projects can show kids that someone cares about what they are doing, and that they are a part of the community. Given the opportunity to take part in one of these projects, maybe a kid will realize that he or she is connected, has a purpose, and makes a difference in the community. Let's hope they all will have that opportunity. 

For more information, contact Susan Paige-Morgan at spaigemorgan@ed.state.nh.us or call 271-3719.

Project WILD receives Federal financial assistance from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The US Department of the Interior and its bureaus prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion or sex (in educational programs). If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, or if you desire additional information please write to:

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